10: Hilger E-5 (1946-1952) 1957
SG4 Araucanians SG4
Argentina

The chaff is removed on a windy day by letting the wind blow through the kernels as they are slowly let fall off a spadelike wooden implement with which they are lifted off the ground. Before using the grain as food, it is winnowed on a winnowing tray or, if the family lacks one, in a pan or dish.

Non-Araucanian informants noted that horticulture probably had its beginning among the Araucanians with the introduction of the apple tree. The fact that there is no Araucanian word for apple—the Spanish word, manzana, is used—strengthens the belief. Today groves of wild apple trees (manzana silvestre), producing hard, sour apples, are found scattered throughout the Araucanian country, near creeks, rivers, and lakes, from Pulmari to San Martin de los Andes; single trees or three or four of them can often be seen at springs, probably locations of former homesteads (pl. 64, 3). The southernmost grove is near Meliquina (close to lat. 41° S.); a forest of them is found near Lake Alumine (just north of lat. 39° S.). It is said that these cultivated groves and forests resulted from former cultivated ones, and that from their locations one can infer that in the days when settlements had to be accommodated to grazing lands, tolderias were erected nearby at harvest time. Groves of old trees already existed when informants were young. It is interesting to note that the araucaria (pl. 72, 3) are found mainly between latitude 37° and 40° S., practically the same area in which the wild apple is found.

The personnel of the Intendencia de Parque Nacional de Lanin believe that some wild-apple trees are 300 years or more old. A casual sample felled in 1950 had 180 rings, "and it was not an old or very large tree." In general it is believed that Jesuit Fathers introduced the apple trees from Chile in the seventeenth century. Tree-ring dating might verify the time of introduction.

Today cultivated apple, peach, plum, and cherry trees are seen about many homes. Every family has a vegetable garden. Gardens are worked with hoes. Women plant the seeds by hand. Informants were raising potatoes, beans, peas, corn, cabbage, lettuce, garlic, and cilantro. Several women were also raising medicinal plants, most frequent among them, toronjil. There is a belief that wheat, potatoes, beans, and peas must be planted during the first quarter of the moon if a good harvest is desired; planting them at any other time will result in an abundance of leaves but a scanty yield.

An occasional garden and field, today, is fenced in (pls. 64, 1; 72, 2; 76, 3); many more need to be fenced to keep sheep and cattle out. More glades could be planted with wheat if they could be protected against grazing animals. Material for fences is difficult to obtain.